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## **Lounge Created for Adult, Commuting Students; Grand Opening Set**

*Apr-13-2005*

Adult and commuting students at Eastern Illinois University now have a home away from home when they're on campus.

An Adult/Commuter Student Lounge – complete with lockers, tables, Internet hookups for laptops, carpet, plants and even a couple of comfortable stuffed chairs – has been created in the balcony area that overlooks the food court in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union.

“There are a lot of places you can study on this campus, but I think it's nice to have a place designated as an area for adult students,” said Nancy Crone, a graduate student who leads OASIS, a support group for nontraditional students. “It's nice that administrators recognize that adult students' needs are a little different from traditional students'.”

The lounge, which was recently completed, will host a grand opening celebration from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, April 21, with a ribbon-cutting at 3 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Speakers are to include EIU President Lou Hencken; William Hine, dean of the School of Continuing Education; and Karla Sanders, director of the Center for Academic Support and Achievement.

Sheri Wahner of Sullivan, a junior sociology major, has classes on campus each weekday, so she uses the lounge often.

“It's a nice, quiet place to study and just relax and meet other adults,” Wahner said. “I definitely think adult students should take advantage of it.”

Carla Jewett of Effingham, a senior in the Board of Trustees Adult Degree Program, is on campus twice a week for classes, but she also sometimes heads to the lounge on other days to study because it's quieter than her home.

“One day, I came here for five hours and did homework,” Jewett said. “I came up here and ate my lunch and read and read.”

Audrey Bachelder, an academic adviser for bachelor's in general studies in the School of Continuing Education, served on the lounge's planning committee.

“It recognizes that there are students here on campus who do not live on campus, and they are an important part of the student body,” Bachelder said.

The lounge's creation was funded mostly by the School of Continuing Education.

“I believe that it is a strong demonstration of Eastern's growing understanding and commitment to adult continuing students,” said Hine, the school's dean.

A recent survey indicated that 40 percent of students, including traditional students, are taking classes at 4 p.m. or later, Hine said. And more and more students are taking on- and off-campus classes at the same time.

A staff member from the School of Continuing Education is to be in the lounge from 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays to provide information related to EIU academic programs and processes, Hine said.